THE DAILY PUBLIC LEDGER

Published Daily Except Sunday, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving and Christmas By The Ledger Publishing Company, Maysville, Kentucky.

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Local and Long Distance Telephone No. 46. Office—Public Ledger Building.

Entered at the Maysville, Kentucky, Postoffice as Second-class Mail Matter.

SUBSCRIPTIONS—BY MAIL.

One Year	$3.00
Six Months	1.50
Three Months	.75

DELIVERED BY CARRIER.

Per month ..... 25 Cents

Payable To Collector At End of Month.

KEEPING UP HIGHWAYS.

The season for working on the highways approaches. To many public officials the problem of keeping up the roads with the limited appropriations available, in face of modern automobile and motor truck business, seems almost insoluble. There are observers who say the roads are growing worse rather than better, in spite of the millions being spent. The road builders of ten years ago did not realize the heavy strain that would have to be met.

Touring motorists say they do not usually find the worst strips of road in the rural districts, at least not on the main lines of travel. They get their worst jolts in sizable and substantial towns. It is here that the motor trucks and other heavy teaming tear up the surface, and make many a handsome street one long humpy surface.

A visitor from another city was giving some interesting experience from his home town. The appropriation for streets was cut down one-third two years ago, and no permanent work could be attempted. The superintendent decided that all they could do was simply to keep the surface from growing worse. So the men filled up every little hollow they could find and rolled it down solidly.

As soon as new hollows started they were filled and rolled. When heavy showers came the water ran off and formed few puddles. There were no depressions in which heavy trucks could get a leverage, and grind out still deeper holes. It was his opinion that under this policy of watchfulness, the road had held their own and probably improved, though with a smaller expenditure.

It is of course a mistake to stop permanent work on the roads. Every municipality should do some of it each year. But the policy of constant watchfulness to stop hollows from enlarging into holes will do wonders. A shovelful in a little depression today may save a cartload next month.

Some people have been inclined to attribute the changeable weather of this spring to a suspicion that President Wilson is in personal charge of the weather bureau.

Stingaree

By E. W. HORNUNG, Author of "Raffles"

Motion Pictures by Kalem Company

Read the Story and Then See the Pictures

Epilogue.

THE DARKEST HOUR.

By Charles N. Lurie.

RADIANT and happy from her tour of the principal Australian cities and towns, Ethel Porter, society girl and songbird from England, held court in Government House, Sydney, on the eve of her departure for home.

The titled governor general and his lady, although they represented his majesty of England and the queen consort, for the nonce abdicated in favor of a commoner. Ethel Porter reigned in queenly fashion in Government House. The most devoted of her courtiers was her fiance, John Kent, who had sailed from England to witness for himself the beautiful young singer's triumph.

But happy as she seemed, time had not effaced from Ethel Porter's mind the memory of Irving Randolph, once her affianced lover, whom the unjust charge of killing James Kelton had driven from England and changed into the notorious outlaw and bushranger known throughout Australia as Stingaree. Australia is far from England, however, and the years brought to Ethel no tale of her lost lover.

Small wonder was it, then, that in time she hearkened to the words of love whispered to her by John Kent, devoted friend of Irving Randolph, and affianced herself to him. In John Kent's love of Ethel and his avowal to her there was no hint of disloyalty to Irving. Like Ethel, he believed Irving long since passed from the land of the living. The stories of Stingaree's exploits reached England, but no one connected the name of the daring bushranger with that of Irving Randolph.

From afar another at the Government House worshiped Ethel Porter, although no one suspected his devotion. It was a platonic love, indeed, that Lucius Brady, sixty years old, famous criminologist, president of the London Society For the Cultivation of

Ethel Porter Was Bidding Goodby to Her Australian Friends.

Criminals, felt for Ethel. He could never be really won from his devotion to his wrongdoers and the books treating of the proper way in which they should be managed and reformed. He woke from them long enough to tell himself that fair, young Ethel Porter was a dream, a beautiful dream. She noticed his devotion and laughingly chatted with him and sang for him.

In return he told her of his researches in criminology in all parts of the world. He had nothing more dramatic to tell her than his experience with Stingaree here in Sydney, when the great Stingaree had done him the honor of binding him and gagging him and then walking off clad in the aged scientist's clothing.

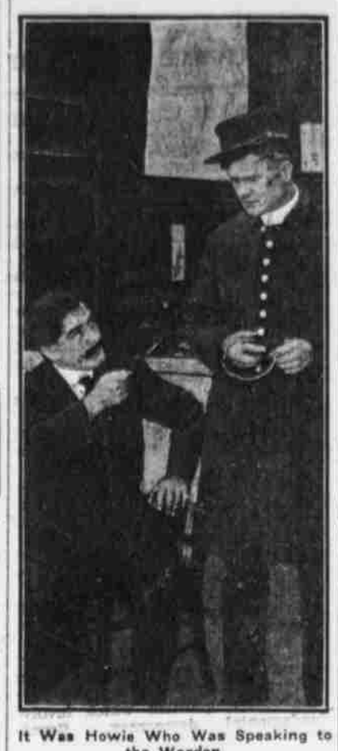
And Ethel Porter listened with interest, never dreaming that the Stingaree of whom the tale was told was in reality Irving Randolph!

"I really liked him, Miss Ethel, upon my word," said Professor Brady, "in spite of the rude manner in which he treated me. As in most criminals, there's the germ of good in that young man. You know, he never killed any one in all his robberies, although he nearly did for me." And the professor rubbed his throat ruefully.

* * * * * * *

"Give me my white mare Barmaid, put Howie at my side and with five minutes' start—"

The thought passed through the mind of a man sitting with head bowed in his hands in a cell in Darlinghurst jail, the famous prison of Sydney. On the dingy gray garb of the man who thought thus was printed a profusion of the "broad arrows" with which Britain marks her convict sons.



It Was Howie Who Was Speaking to the Warden.

The man was tall and well built, and as he raised his face there might have been seen the piercing dark eyes which had looked through a mask at many a frightened stagecoach driver. For the man was Stingaree, the outlaw, again held in the toils of the law.

A moment of carelessness or perhaps bravado in the old manner of Stingaree had cost him dear. He had been caught in a far corner of the "back blocks" and had been taken. Had he not held fast to his resolution not to take human life the cell in Darlinghurst would never have held him again. But his scruples stayed his trigger finger, and the men of the law had downed him. In his misfortune there was but one alleviation—Howie, his old companion in crime, had escaped.

And it was Howie, shorn of his long black beard and disguised in the uniform of a prison guard, who was speaking now to the warden of Darlinghurst jail.

"Yes, sir; I'll watch him. I know the reputation of that man Stingaree, sir!"

By devious ways and long, Howie had made his way back to civilization and, for loyalty to his chum, had taken on himself the task of acquiring a place in the jail. His powerful physique, once of such service to Stingaree in the bush, now availed Stingaree again, for it led directly to the appointment of Howie to a place in the division of the prison which housed the bushranger.

"I'll watch him, sir." And Howie went on duty.

Just how Howie compassed Stingaree's escape needs no lengthy telling. A smuggled in suit of clothes, hidden beneath Howie's uniform, a rope and a gag whereby Howie was made to seem the innocent victim of the desperado, all was simply planned.

What cannot be described is Stingaree's joy at finding in his new guard his faithful but greatly altered friend of the bush.

There was barely time for a brief period of reminiscences of the old free days when the two "stuck up" coaches and wayfarers. But when the exchange of clothing was made and Howie, bound and ready to be gagged, lay in Stingaree's bunk a new trouble arose in the mind of the escaping convict.

"I'll get out, I'm sure," he said. "But what shall I do, where shall I go, when I am free of these cursed walls?"

"Go to Government House," said Howie. "You'll find there Ethel Porter, who was your sweetheart in England. She has been touring Australia as a concert singer. She will help you."

"Ethel here—in Australia!"

"Yes," said Howie. "And if you're the man you used to be you'll find a way to go back to the old country with her or coax her to remain here with you."

With eager, hastening fingers Stingaree tautened the ropes which bound Howie and adjusted the gag.

"Goodby, old man, and God bless you!" said Stingaree.

Howie's eyes followed him as he left the cell. There was the devotion of a faithful hound in his expression. Try as hard as he might he could not assume a properly grieved expression when he was found in his plight by the warden and the other guards after Stingaree had stunned one of them in his successful flight to the open.

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At Government House Ethel Porter and John Kent were making their last adieux. Wearying of the gay scene—for no other pretty young woman, not even the governor general's flirtatious young consort, interested him—Professor Lucius Brady sought out a quiet nook in the garden wherein to read the latest treatise on "The Treatment of the Criminal Atavist as Indicated by Anthropological Researches."

"Bless my soul!" he said to himself, half aloud, as a hitherto unnoticed argument impressed itself upon him.

He looked up. Another "Bless my soul!" but of quite a different sort, escaped from his lips as his eyes met those of Stingaree fixed keenly upon him. "And who are you, sir? And what do you want?"

"You helped me once, unwillingly," said Stingaree, speaking in a low voice and with a quick glance behind him to see if any one approached. "Help me again, I beg of you."

"Who are you?"

"I am Stingaree, who bound you and gagged you and left you in my cell. They took me again. I have escaped. You said that you believed I was not bad at heart. Will you give me a chance to prove it?"

Throughout his British majesty's dominions there is not to be found a queerer mixture of sentiment and sense or of hard headedness and unpracticality than finds its lodgment in the skin of Professor Lucius Brady, master of criminology.

For a few moments he hesitated. It was his clear duty to hand Stingaree over to the police, and he was a man of honor and reverence for the law. But before him stood a fellow being appealing for aid, a fellow man in whom he had once felt a strange, poignant interest and one who he thought could and should be reclaimed to the ways of honest society.

The dreamer's expression left Professor Brady's face as the mist on a marsh is swept away by a morning breeze, and his features hardened.

"I'll do it," he said, "and hang the consequences! What do you want me to do?"

"I want to see Miss Porter. Bring her to me here in the garden. And I thank you!"

It was no easy task to bring Ethel from the laughing, gay, excited throng gathered to bid goodby to her and her fiance. Never before in the career of the elderly, eccentric Professor Brady had he been suspected of diplomatic ability. But any one with a knowledge of his motive would have admired the way in which he managed to draw Ethel aside and tell her that some one in the garden desired to see her. Excusing herself to the gay company and to Kent, Ethel went out.

Stingaree's back was turned to her as she approached. He dared not trust to his control of his emotions. After all these years the dear, sweet old days in England seemed so far away!

"You wished to see me?" said Ethel. And Stingaree turned to look into her eyes.

"Ethel!"

"Why—why—Professor Brady said—are you Stingaree? Irving!"

"I am Stingaree," he said sadly. "I have come to you from a prison cell to ask your forgiveness and your aid. Will you help me?"

"Why did you come here? They will recapture you! You must go away!"

A flash of the old time Stingaree entered his face as he said:

"This is the last place they will seek me in. I have formed a plan. You

He Told Ethel Some One Awaited Her In the Garden.

are here with your fiance, my old friend John Kent, who helped me to flee from England when I was accused unjustly of killing Kelton. If he will help me again I will escape. Can you induce him to aid me?"

"He must—he will! We and all in England know you to be innocent of crime in England, even if your career here has been wrong. I will bring him to you. Wait!"

"Tell him I have a plan."

Ethel barely heard the words as she turned to hasten back to the house. Her friends thought her manner strange as she re-entered, but attributed it to the natural excitement incident to returning to England. Seeking out Kent, she drew him to a doorway and almost literally forced him through it into the garden.

Before the bewildered man realized fully what was happening, he found himself before his old friend Irving Randolph and listening to a plea for aid in the plan to escape.

"For old time's sake, John, take me with you as your man. They will not suspect a friend of the governor general and the fiance of Ethel Porter of harboring an escaping criminal. Ethel has told me that my name has been cleared in England. If I can get back to the old country safely, no one need know there that I was Stingaree, the bushranger. He can disappear, and I shall again be Irving Randolph of Randolph Towers."

It needed no strong plea to persuade John Kent, staunch friend of Irving in the olden days. But a momentary hesitation took possession of him as the thought of the threefold relationship of the three flashed into his mind. She had loved Irving before the unjust accusation drove him to Australia and the life in the bush. Perhaps she loved him still, although she had promised to wed him, John Kent, and he loved her. And Irving—did he still care for her? What would it mean to himself if the two were free to know again the old fondness?

Only for a moment did such thoughts fill the mind of Kent. Loyalty to his friend won the day, and he clasped Irving's hand with a promise:

"All right, old man! I'll see you

(To be continued)

The brick manufacturer has some excuse for wanting the earth.